



March 11, 2026

The Honorable Teresa Tanzi, Chair
House Finance Subcommittee on Human Services
Room 35
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: In Support of FY 2027 Budget Articles – RI Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Dear Chair Tanzi, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Human Services,

I write today on behalf of Youth Villages to enthusiastically support the FY2027 proposed budget article for the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

Youth Villages is a national organization dedicated to helping vulnerable children and their families live successfully through two evidence-based and evidence-informed services offered across the country in 29 states; including Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. With child safety as our primary focus, Intercept[®] is a nationally recognized model that helps vulnerable youth from birth to 18 years old by providing intensive support to families in their home and community. This program is used to divert children, a majority of which are involved with the state child welfare system, from costlier and often less effective out-of-home placements or to reunify children with family.

In Fall 2024, we were thrilled to be awarded a contract with DCYF to provide home-based services and improve health outcomes for youth associated with the state system through our evidence-based Intercept[®] program. This contract allowed us to begin offering Intercept services to Rhode Island youth for the first time and we served our first youth in September 2024. Through December 2025, we served 192 youth through Intercept. We typically provide services to youth and families for six to nine months before discharge. Our Intercept program has proven results across the country; across the United States in FY25, 88% of youth were living at home or independently, 91% had no further involvement with the law, and 97% had graduated, were in school, or were employed at one year post-discharge.¹

DCYF has invested in their youth and families by providing up to 83 youth and families per day access to the Intercept program. A key part of our Intercept program is to partner with DCYF to provide holistic services to the youth and families we serve, particularly in connecting them with behavioral health care services.

Youth Villages is appreciative of the Committee's ongoing commitment to strengthening Rhode Island's system of care for children and families. As the state moves forward with significant changes to their

¹ <https://youthvillages.org/about-us/annual-report/>

Medicaid financing and service delivery, Youth Villages respectfully raises the following items for the committee's consideration during the budget process.

The current Medicaid transformation process presents risks to provider stability and subsequently service availability due to the proposed new rates. Youth Villages, alongside the other service providers in Rhode Island, deliver critical behavioral health and child welfare services to the youth and families of Rhode Island. However, to continue sustainably delivering these services, the rates must be adequate to support the program, workforce, and administrative costs.

Additionally, availability of sufficient General Revenue and other flexible funding sources is crucial because unlike adult systems, children's behavioral health and child welfare services cannot rely exclusively on Medicaid reimbursement. Prevention services, family stabilization efforts, and other support for youth require funding streams that allow agencies to intervene early and respond holistically to child's circumstances. DCYF relies on community-based organizations, like Youth Villages, to meet the needs of youth involved in the child welfare system and it is important to ensure this responsiveness can be maintained as the reimbursement environment evolves.

We are grateful to DCYF for their partnership and for the commitments of the state to improving services for children with behavioral health needs. Youth Villages fully supports the state in continued achievement of their goals through improved financing structures, provider sustainability, and maintaining flexibility to meet the needs of the youth in Rhode Island.

Thank you to the committee for your diligence, advocacy, and support for our work and for the kids and families we serve,

Matt Stone, MSSW

Executive Director

Youth Villages New England